

Link exchange maintenance

What should you be doing to check you link exchanges and how often should you be doing it? If you are already running a link exchange program, my answer will probably frighten you!

Personally, based on my experience with search engines, I believe that you should be checking link exchanges every week! More often than this is probably a little bit of overkill, but less often, especially by much, and you will find that a lot of the people you thought you were exchanging links with have gone away.

On a weekly basis you should check that every site that you have agreed to link with is still linking back to you. Any sites that have removed their links need checking. Email them to ask them to replace the link and if they don't then remove the from your pages link. It's no benefit to you to be linking to them from your directory, it may even hinder your efforts. This is why weekly checks are important.

Whenever there is a Google page rank update, have a look through the page ranks of those sites linking to you and check that they all still have a page rank. Any that don't need further investigation.

It could just be that the links page is too new or too well buried to have a page rank. If it's cached in Google then it's probably OK. But if a links page has been showing your link for a couple of months and it's still not cached, then you need to check that you aren't being tricked.

First, have a look around the site and make sure that you can find your way to the links page. Then, have a nose at the robots.txt file - does that block their links directory? Lastly, take a look at the path of pages from the home page to the links directory. Does page rank suddenly vanish? If so, check that page hasn't been blocked somewhere.

It's also important when using a links directory tool to make sure that people haven't changed their links to inappropriate sites and that sites that you are linking to still exist, as sites that you are happy to link to. You don't want to be proudly linking to a family friendly site only to find that someone has bought the URL and put up an adult site!

So, on a weekly basis, be checking that your link backs still exist. Plus, every few months, see which link back pages don't have a page rank and investigate them.